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- Claims 1 to 23 remain pending in this application.
- Claims 1, 5, 8-12, and 17-23 have been amended herein

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 to 23 "under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barto et al. U.S. Patent 6,564,113 in view of Allen, Jr. et al. U.S. Patent 6,763,277 and Christensen et al. U.S. Patent 6,431,814." Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

However, solely to expedite prosecution, Applicants have herein amended each of the pending independent claims to make explicit that which was implicit: namely, that each small lot size substrate carrier is "adapted to transport fewer than a maximum of 13 substrates." This amendment is in conformance with the language Applicants' representative and the Examiner agreed distinguished over the combination of references relied upon in the present Office Action. (Please see the Summary of Examiner Interview filed herewith.)

More specifically, in the present Office Action, the Examiner interpreted the prior wording of Applicants' claim language to include small lot size substrate carriers that could carry more than 13 substrates and thus, relied upon the Christensen reference, which teaches a carrier that can hold up to 25 substrates, in his rejection. Applicants' claims as amended herein clearly do not recite the use of large lot carriers as taught in the Christensen reference. Thus, as agreed in the Examiner Interview, the present Section 103 rejection is clearly overcome by Applicants' present

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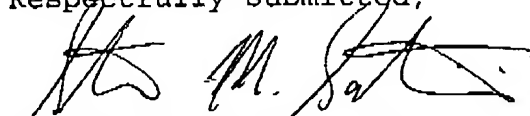
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amendments, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection.

Applicants believe the claims are now in condition for allowance, and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the same.

A separate Request for a Two-Month Extension of Time is enclosed herewith, with authorization to charge the requisite extension fee to Deposit Account No. 04-1696. Applicants do not believe any other Request for Extension of Time is required but if it is, please accept this paragraph as a Request for Extension of Time and authorization to charge the requisite extension fee to Deposit Account No. 04-1696. Applicants do not believe any additional fees are due regarding this Amendment. However, if any additional fees are required, please charge Deposit Account No. 04-1696.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Tarrytown, New York